

De La Guerra House (La casa de la Guerra)  
11-19 East De La Guerra Street  
Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County  
California

HABS No. CAL-313

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction  
450 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, California

LA CASA DE LA GUERRA  
Residence originally, at present, 1936, part  
residence part shops for arts and antiques.  
125 de la Guerra Street, Santa Barbara,  
Santa Barbara County, California.

Owner: De la Guerra Properties, Inc.

Date of Erection: 1818 - 1826

Architect:

Builder: Owner - Jose Antonio Julian de la Guerra Y  
Noriega, with the aid of Indian labor.

Present Condition: The structure is well preserved,  
alterations and repairs having been made at various  
times. Most of the original house with finish and trim  
remain. The original roofs over the porches were re-  
placed in 1915 with new supporting posts set out beyond  
the porch floor and a roof of greater overhang, covered  
with tile in place of shingles. Certain repairs and  
alterations were made in 1922 to meet the requirements  
of tenants by James Osborn Craig designer and Carlton M.  
Winslow, architect as supervisor.

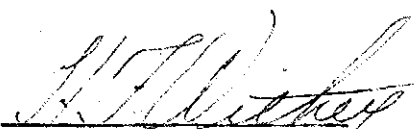
Number of stories: one, small part two.

Materials of construction: Foundations of field stones,  
walls of adobe brick plastered both sides, wood framed  
roofs, tile covered. A portion of the porch floors are  
of large tile, balance of wood flooring. Interior floors  
are part tile, part wood.

Other existing records: "The Old Mission Churches and  
Historic Houses of California" by Rexford Newcomb, 1925.  
A community history "Santa Barbara Tierra Adorada" pre-  
pared by Laurence S. Hill and Marion Parks and published  
by Security First National Bank of Los Angeles 1930.  
Bancrofts "History of California". "The Early Days of  
Santa Barbara" by Walter A. Hawley, 1920 pages 86-87  
"Two Years before the Mast" by Richard Henry Dana.  
"75 Years in California" William Heath Davis. P 239

Additional Data:

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL LANDMARK 1007



March 1, 1937



de la Guerra house

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## Part 1: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. De La Guerra house (La casa de la Guerra)
- B. Location: 11-19 East De La Guerra Street  
Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County, Calif.
- C. Present owners: T. Suski.
- D. Present Occupants: Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce,  
several small retail establishments  
and offices.
- E. Present use: Offices, retail stores.
- F. Brief statement of significance: The De la Guerra house is important, both as an architectural monument and for the historical events and personages which have been associated with its long history. It is unquestionably the major monument of the Spanish and Mexican period in Santa Barbara. Architecturally it is also of great significance for the part it played in the creation of the 20th century Spanish Colonial revival in southern California. The various members of the De la Guerra family occupied important positions in Santa Barbara and in California political and social life. The house has been made famous by the description of such 19th century visitors as Richard Henry Dana, Alfred Robinson and others.
- G. Physical History.
  - 1. Description of original building and subsequent remodelings: The house was begun in 1819 and was basically completed in 1826(?). It is most likely that the traditional "U" shaped plan, with a "U" shaped corridor-porch around a patio was determined by its original owner Jose Antonio Julian de la Guerra y Noreiga. According to Cullimore (1948, p. 25) and other authors the building was constructed by local Indian labor. The adobe brick for the walls, and the sycamore timbers used for the roof beams and rafters and for the lintel over the doors and windows were all obtained locally. Some timber used for finished wood details and the largest of the ceiling-roof beams was imported from the north. It is not known whether the tile was locally made or not, but since local tile was produced for buildings in the Presidio complex, it seems reasonable to suppose that they were similarly produced for the De la Guerra house.

Various changes were made to the house throughout the 19th century (see alterations and additions), but fundamentally it remained unchanged. Through the first decade of this

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century it continued to be used as a private residence (generally with several De la Guerra families living in one or another wing of the house). In 1919 the house was restored and incorporated into the El Paseo complex of offices and stores. The remodeling and restoration were accomplished by the architects James Osborne Craig and Carleton Monroe Winslow. The building has continued to be used for the same purpose up until the present. Very few physical changes have been made in the building since 1922.

2. History of Ownership: Original owner and builder, Jose Antonio de la Guerra y Noreiga (1779-1858; remained in possession of the De la Guerra family until the second decade of this century when it was purchased by Bernard Hoffman and made a part of El Paseo. It is presently owned by T. Suski.
3. Date of erection: 1819 to 1826  
There is some disagreement about these dates. The Historic American Building Survey of 1936 gave the date of 1818. Cullimore (1948; p. 25) gives the date of 1819. Cullimore and others also assert that the house was finished in 1826, although according to tradition the largest of the ceiling-roof beams did not reach Santa Barbara until 1827 when they were delivered from a French ship commanded by Duhaut-Cilly.
4. Name of architect: none
5. Description of the original structure.  
It seems reasonable to assume that the original structure consisted solely of two wings and the central portion of the house. The west wing contained four rooms arranged along side one another in a row; the central section housed a passage way where it joined the west wing and six other rooms, one of which was the large living room; the exact internal division of space in the east wing must remain conjectural since all of the present interior walls are of wood. The gable roofs of the central portion and of the two wings were covered with tile; although we do not possess any specific references to the roof covering of the corridor porch, it would seem likely that this was shingled rather than tiled. The walls of the house, within and without were plastered and painted white. General descriptions of Santa Barbara at this time speak of the white stuccoed

walls and tiled roof of the houses.

Alfred Robinson who visited Santa Barbara in 1829 (Robinson, 1891, p. 53) wrote "For we found the houses of the town, of which there were some two hundred, in not very good condition. They are built in the Spanish mode, with adobe walls, and roofs of tile; and are scattered about outside the military department. . . ." Specifically referring to the De la Guerra house he wrote (Robinson, 1891, p. 277) "The town consists of about fifty dwelling houses, in the midst of which one, the most prominent of all in point of structure and general appearance, called La Casa Grande. This was the residence of Don Jose Antonio de la Guerra. . . ." It is interesting to note that Richard Henry Dana says nothing about the white adobe walls of Santa Barbara, in fact he contrasts the brown adobe walls of Santa Barbara with the white walls of Monterey. (Dana, 1886, p. 26-63.) His description of the wedding party at the De la Guerra house in 1836 provides very little information about the house. (Dana, 1886, pp. 280-285.)

Evidence is completely lacking as to the original character of the doors and windows. J. T. Farnham, who wrote about the city of Santa Barbara at the middle of the 19th century indicates that a few of the houses did have glass windows (Farnham, 1862, p. 108) and if any house in the town had glass windows one would reasonably assume that it would be the De la Guerra house. The double hung windows with 6 panes per sash which occur in the De la Guerra house are similar to the windows found in houses in the Monterey area which date from about the same period.

There is a lack of evidence as well as to the floor covering of the corridor-porch which ran along 3 sides of the house. It was of wood in the later 19th century, but whether wood was the original covering is presently unknown. John R. Southworth records that the original porch columns were 20" square plastered adobe piers, which were later replaced by wood. (Southworth, 1920).

#### 6. Alterations and additions:

When Dana revisited Santa Barbara in 1859, he said that the De la Guerra house (and for that matter the whole town itself) was little changed (Dana, 1886, 444-445). Edward Roberts mentioned the house in his 1888 book on Santa Barbara, but his account is far too general to be of much help in forming a picture of what it was like at that time (Roberts, 1888, pp. 69-70). A far more

valuable source of information are two etchings of the house by Henry Chapman Ford. One of these is an etching of the rear of the house which Ford made in 1886 (reproduced in Spaulding's 36 etchings by Henry Chapman Ford) The second of his etchings of the De la Guerra shows the south or street side of the building and is dated 1887. These views of Ford are basically similar to a number of photographs of the house which are in the collection of the Santa Barbara Historical Society.

Sometime after 1826 or 27 (probably before 1850) a two room rear addition was built to the north off the living room and the adjoining chamber to the east. This addition housed the new kitchen area of the house. The shed roof pitch of the new wing was identical to that of the roof of the central portion of the house. The shed roof, forming a continuous plane with the roof of the central section of the house, was tiled. At the northeast corner of the house, also at the rear a two story wing was added; it contained a high ceiling store room and a room, above which tradition asserts, was used for an office. An outside staircase led to this upper floor. The second floor office was set back on the flat roof of the lower floor and in old photographs of the building it appears that there were porches on both the west and east side. The upper floor was covered by a shingle gable roof. An interesting structural feature of the upper office room was the way in which the rows of adobe were gently curved in the gable end, forming a very low arch.

Between this two story wing and the shed roofed rear kitchen wing was a porch or rather two porches, one of which was covered by a shed roof, the other by a double pitched shingle covered roof.

Also at some time in the mid 19th century the house was at least partially sheathed in clapboard. The adobe porch columns were replaced possibly at the same time that the clap board was applied. The new posts were built up wood columns. These later columns were again replaced, apparently at about the turn of the century with solid wooden posts. The only other known major modification in the later 19th century was the enclosing of the south ends of the west and east corridor porches to form two rooms. The thin exterior walls of each of these rooms was of wood frame, sheathed in clapboard.

A number of modifications were made between

1919 and 1922 when the house was integrated into El Paseo. The additions to the rear, including the two story section, were razed and were replaced by a new wing (part of which was two stories in height) built of hollow tile. (see Historic American Building Survey drawings of the building as it was first remodeled by Craig and Winslow). Also at this time a passage was cut through the west side of the central portion; and the door which had led to the street at the south end of the west wing was transformed into a window. Other changes were made in the way of plumbing, etc.

In 1963 a part of the west corridor porch was again enclosed.

7. Important events and personages: The first occupant of the house, Jose Antonio de la Guerra y Noriega was the 5th Comandante of the Spanish Presidio (from 1815 to 1839). De la Guerra eventually became a major land owner in the area, holding four ranches which totaled some 216,000 acres (Lewis, 1957; pp. 26 and 28). In part, the architectural character of the De la Guerra house inspired one of the major monuments of the Spanish Colonial revival in southern California, El Paseo. The architects James Osborne Craig and Carleton Monroe Winslow admirably welded the house into a highly successful shopping and office center during the year 1919 to 1922.
8. Important published and unpublished views:
  - a. General outline of property and of house: Warkenrueder's Map # 2 of the City of Santa Barbara in 1852.
  - b. View of rear (north side) of house. Etching by Henry Chapman Ford reproduced in Edward Selden Spaulding's 36 Etchings by Henry Chapman Ford, Santa Barbara Historical Society.
  - c. View of south side of house by Henry Chapman Ford. Original Etching. In the collection of the Santa Barbara Historical Society, Santa Barbara.
  - d. 3 historic photographs of house. (all three of north side of house). In collection of the Santa Barbara Historical Society, Santa Barbara.
  - e. Photograph of the house ca. 1901, reproduced in the Santa Barbara News Press, March 30, 1952.
  - f. Etching by Edward Borein of the south side of the house, ca. 1910 (?). In the collection of the Santa Barbara Historical Society.

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- g. Illustration c. 1910 of south side of house in Walter A. Hawley, The Early Days of Santa Barbara, The Schauer Printing Studio, Santa Barbara, 1920, p. 94.
- h. Various views of house reproduced in E. S. Madison, "Hacienda de la Guerra, A Spanish Casa built by three thousand Indians," Sunset, Vol. 26, January, 1911, pp. 37-47.
- i. Various photographs of house reproduced in John R. Southworth, Historic Adobes of Santa Barbara, California privately printed, Santa Barbara, 1920.
- j. View of south side of house reproduced in H. Philip Staats, California Architecture in Santa Barbara, Architectural Book Publishing Co., New York, 1929, p. 3.
- k. Two general views of the house, reproduced in Tierra Adorada, A Community History, prepared by Laurence L. Hill, published by the First National Bank of Los Angeles, 1930, pp. 14 and 19.
- l. Two photographs of the south side of the house reproduced in Donald Hannaford and Revel Edward, Spanish Colonial or Adobe Architecture of California, 1800-1850, Architectural Book Publishing Co., New York, 1931, p. 65.
- m. Drawing of the house reproduced in Myrtle Garrison, Romance and History of California Ranches, Harr Wagner Publishing Co., San Francisco, 1935, p. 104.
- n. Drawing by C. Cullimore based upon 1901 photograph of north side of the house, reproduced in Charles Cullimore, Santa Barbara Adobes, Santa Barbara Book Publishing Co., Santa Barbara, 1948, p.20.
- 9. References:
  - a. California Historical Landmarks # 307
  - b. Community Arts Association, Plans and Planting Committee, Old Adobes of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, 1947.
  - c. Cone, Mary, Two years in California. S. C. Griggs and Co., Chicago 1876, p. 90.
  - d. Cullimore, Clarence "Historic de la Guerra Adobe," Architect and Engineer, Vol. 152, March, 1943, pp. 24-25.
  - e. Cullimore, Clarence, Santa Barbara Adobes, Santa Barbara Book Publishing Co., Santa Barbara, 1948, pp. 20-26.



- f. Dana, Richard Henry, Two Years Before the Mast.  
Houghton Mifflin and Co., Boston, 1886, pp. 62-63;  
280-285; 444-445.
- g. Davis, William H. 75 years in California, 1831-  
1901, John Howell, San Francisco, 1901, p. 239.
- h. Farnham, J. T. The Early Days of California,  
John E. Potter, Philadelphia, 1862, p. 108.
- i. Garrison, Myrtle, Romance and History of Calif-  
ornia Ranches, Harr Wagner, San Francisco,  
1935, pp. 103-104.
- j. Hannaford, D. R. and Edward, R. Spanish Colonial  
or Adobe Architecture in California, 1800-1850.  
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1931, p. 3.
- k. Hawley, Walter A. The Early Days of Santa  
Barbara. The Schauer Printing Studio, Santa  
Barbara, 1920, pp. 87-88.
- l. Hill, Laurence L. Tierra Adorada, published by  
The First National Bank of Los Angeles, 1930,  
p. 14 and 19.
- m. Historic American Building Survey, National Park  
Service, Washington D. C., 1941, p. 49.
- n. Lewis, Oscar, Here Lived the Californians.  
Rinehart and Co., New York, 1957, pp. 25 and 28.
- o. Madison, E. S. "Hacienda de la Guerra, A Spanish  
Casa built by three thousand Indians," Sunset  
Vol. 26, January, 1911, pp. 34-47.
- p. Newcomb, Rexford, The Old Mission Churches and  
Historic Houses of California, J. B. Lippincott  
Co., 1925, pp. 322-326.
- q. Roberts, Edward, Santa Barbara and Around There,  
Robert Brothers, Boston, 1888, pp. 69-70.
- r. Robinson, Alfred, Life in California. William  
Doxey, Publisher, San Francisco, 1891, pp. 53, 277.
- s. Santa Barbara News Press.  
December 17, 1943  
March 30, 1952  
June 5, 1960
- t. Southworth, John R. Historic Adobes of Santa  
Barbara, California, privately printed, Santa  
Barbara, 1920, pp. 4-5, 7-8.
- u. Spaulding, Edward Seldon. 36 Etchings by Henry  
Chapman Ford, Santa Barbara Historical Society,  
Santa Barbara.
- v. Staats, H. Philip California Architecture in  
Santa Barbara, Architectural Book Publishing Co.  
New York, 1929, p. 3.
- w. Thompson and West, History of Santa Barbara and  
Ventura Counties, California, originally  
published in Oakland, 1883; republished by  
Howell-North, Berkeley, 1961, pp. 44-45.

David Gebhard  
August 6, 1965

## Part 11: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. Name: De la Guerra house  
Address: 11-19 East De la Guerra Street  
Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County, Calif.
- B. Number of stories: one; although there is storage space in the upper portion of the west wing; and the new section to the rear added in 1919-1922 has a second story section.
- C. Type of wall construction: Adobe; new walls on north side, hollow tile.
- D. Layout: "U" shaped plan, one room deep.
- E. General Statement: Architectural Interest and Merit.  
Through the late Spanish and the Mexican period the De la Guerra Casa was indeed the "Casa Grande" (as Robinson wrote of the house, during his visit in 1829 (Robinson, 1891, p. 277)). The large size of the house was more than equaled by the quality of its detailing, from doors, windows, to the metal work of hinges, locks and door knobs.
- F. General Statement: Condition of Fabric.  
The original structure appears to be in excellent condition, and the wood and metal details have been well taken care of.
- G. Detailed Description: The change in use from that of a residence to an office and retail store has substantially changed the essential character of the building, even though the basic 1819-1826 structure has been little altered. Regrettably there is in existence no specific or general description of the building as it was originally built. Nor do any of the accounts written by visitors in the 19th century (Dana, Davis, Farnham and Robinson) provide us with a meaningful picture of what the building looked like, or how the interior space was divided and detailed. The only three rooms specifically mentioned were the "wine room" at the northwest corner of the house, the large "salon" or living room in the central portion of the house, and two story wing to the rear, the upper part of which housed an office and the lower part a store room.

The thick (ca. 3' 6") adobe walls which divide the west wing into four rooms would reasonably seem to be original, although certain details such as the staircase and the balcony of the upper storage area are probably not original. The present window at the south gable end of the west wing is shown in late 19th century photographs as a door, rather

than, as it is now, a window. The contemporary wood columns which support the corridor-porch (in front of all 3 sections of the house) is a replacement of earlier built up wood columns which in their turn were a replacement of the original 20" square adobe brick columns. The recent (1964) glass enclosure of part of the west wing corridor-porch is completely out of character with the architecture of the house.

The central wing was changed and modified rather extensively in the 1919-1922 remodeling. The north kitchen lean-to wing (of adobe with tile roof), and the two story store room and office at the northeast corner were torn down and replaced by a bank of rooms, which are more Spanish Colonial Revival of the 1920's than provincial Spanish of the early 19th century. The original passageway which led through the central wing from the entrance patio to the rear of the house was abandoned in the 1919-1922 remodeling and a new larger and more centrally located passageway was provided, which gave direct access to the central court of the El Paseo shopping area. When Craig and Winslow first remodeled the house (1919-1922) the central wing was still to be used as a residence; all of the rooms are now used for retail stores.

Since the interior portions of the east wing are of wood it is impossible to really know what the plan of this wing originally was. The widening of the corridor-porch and the enclosing of its south end must have been accomplished in the late 19th century. The wall which presently encloses the open end of the south patio was built sometime after 1900, for older photographs do not indicate any enclosure here whatsoever.

- H. Overall dimensions: (See Historic American Buildings Survey, plan of structure)  
West wing 23' 8" x 79' 0"  
Central wing 23' 10" x 111' 3 3/8" (original building)  
East wing 24' 1" x 75' 2"
- I. Foundations: Roughly cut sand stone set in adobe.
- J. Wall construction: Original house. Adobe brick walls, averaging 3' 6" in thickness; plastered over on both interior and exterior. Wood stud plastered walls, interior of east wing. New north section of hollow tile, plastered on exterior and interior.
- K. Porches: "U" shaped porch, average 13' 6" wide, covered with shed roof. Wood columns outside of porch floor; original columns of adobe, 20" square and plastered. Present floor of corridor-porch a mixture of 12" square tiles and of tongue and groove wood. Nature of original floor unknown.
- L. Chimneys: Seven brick chimneys are now in the building; all of these service fireplaces. Two of the chimneys of the central wing are visible in

several of the late 19th century photographs. It is not known whether any of these brick chimneys are original with the house or not.

- M. Openings: Doorways and doors. Many of the door frames would seem to be original, and the same would seem to be true of several of the 3 and 5 paneled wood doors; although it should be noted that many of the doors presently in the building are reproductions of the original doors.
- N. Openings: Windows and shutters. Since the De la Guerra house was rather elaborate for its time, it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that the double hung, 6 glass panes to a sash windows were part of the original structure. If they were not, they were certainly added before the late 1850's. The pairs of interior 2 and 3 panel wood shutters could also have been original, although again most of the window shutters now in the building were accurate reproductions of the few remaining original shutters.
- O. Roof: Shape, covering. Gable roof over the three major portions of the house, shed roof over the corridor-porch and originally a shed roof covering the kitchen wing to rear. A shed roof covered the second floor of the two story storage and office building at the northeast corner of the house. The house was tiled from the very beginning, although the corridor-porch roof and the roof of the two story section were wood shingled. (At present, the corridor-porch roof is tiled).
- P. Roof: Cornice, eaves. Originally it would appear that the roof rafters and the ends of the spaced roof sheathing were left exposed (as evidenced by late 19th century photograph of the house).
- Q. Roof: Dormers, cupolas. None.
- R. Floor plan : "U" shaped plan, one room wide. (see Historica American Buildings Survey drawings of house)
- S. Stairways. Stairway to attic in west wing is most likely a later addition. The stairway in the north wing is modern (result of 1919-1922 rebuilding). Originally there was an exterior stairway to the upper floor of the two story northeast wing.
- T. Flooring: It is likely that the house was provided with wood floors from the beginning. The present 12" square tile and tongue and groove wood floors are all modern.

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- U. Wall and Ceiling Finish: Lime plaster on adobe; interior partitions of east wing, plaster on wood lath. Ceilings, partially plastered, partially left exposed.
- V. Interior doorways and doors: 3 and 5 panel doors, probably original.
- W. Interior trim: Most of the interior wood detailing appears to be more characteristic of the mid-19th century, rather than the early 19th century.
- X. Hardware: Some of the door locks, knobs, bolts, and the "T" and the butt hinges could date from the original house. Like the interior trim the door locks and knobs and the butt hinges are more characteristic of the mid-19th century, than the earlier decades when the house was built.
- Y. Lighting: None original.
- Z. Heating: The seven fireplaces would appear to be a part of the original house, although the mantles and wood detailing may well be mid to late 19th century in date.
- AA. Site: The house originally stood facing a large open plaza or public space, part of which is still preserved in De La Guerra Plaza, part of which is occupied by the present City Hall Building to the east, and commercial buildings to the west. The present street, East De la Guerra Street is a post 1852 feature; as are the retail store buildings directly to each side of the south front of the building. The adjacent "Street of Spain" to the east, and the complex of El Paseo to the north were built in 1919-1922. The wall which encloses the south (front) courtyard or patio was added around the turn of the century. Early travelers commented on the gardens and plantings around the De la Guerra house, but nothing remains of the original landscaping. The west side of the Orena Adobe, which is situated to the east of the De la Guerra house was originally built as a store house. Late 19th century photographs show a wood dove cote, which was situated in the rear (north) garden of the house.

David Gebhard  
August 6, 1965

APPROVED:

*Charles S. Pope*DATE: *November 26, 1965*

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